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## Postscripts by Jack Post

At about the time the sun came out last Wednesday morning, Cid Sumner called to tell us we must come right over to see the hornbeam tree in the richness of its coloring; so we left our work, and drove over to her house. She met us at the door, and together we walked to the edge of the bank, and stood there taking in the deep red of the magnificent tree, the flaming sumac in the hollow to the right, and the yellow gold of the swamp maples on the other side. We carried cups of coffee out onto the little stone terrace behind the living room, and sat there talking of everyday life, while we watched occasional leaves spiral down from the great tree. When the sun went behind the clouds again, it grew too cold to sit out any longer; so we smiled our good-byes, and drove home to lunch.

Pleasant small things happened to those who were lucky enough to know Cid Sumner. She might leave a loaf of her delectable home-baked bread on your kitchen counter if you were not home when she dropped in. If you were, she would stay and talk a while, about people, and writing, and the lovely things that life held out to you if you were alert enough to see them. Old age did not exist for Cid. The important thing was to be aware and this you could be at any age, and in so being fill to the brim your cup of life.

The feeling carried over to others from within herself. Her interest in you ran deep and confident, and so you gathered your abilities to confirm her trust. At the Writers' Round Table, she would listen to someone's story, her eyes alert with appreciation. After the reading had finished, and the quick criticisms had flown back and forth across the table, and finally the dust of conflicting ideas had begun to settle, then Cid might smile and make a small suggestion that would bring the author exactly the clue he needed to give effect to his thought.

Perhaps Cid's books appear old-fashioned now. Certainly she could not, and would not, write in the acid-etched vulgarity of the contemporary style. Hers remained a world of kindness and sensitivity although never mawkish; and the "Tammy" that left her pen mocked the Tammy that simpered it difficult to win acceptance for her quiet sensitive tales in this era of brutal, violent fiction. Her novels, often written in the little cabins of the MacDowell Colony, deep in the woods behind Peterborough, in recent years became difficult to sell. Yet, old pro that she was, this did not stop her. She turned to writing articles and non-fiction diaries that she had kept since she was twelve. Out of this she would weave amusing stories of yesterday against today's background; or even write an autobiography.

The title of one of her earlier books, successfully adapted to the movies, had been "Quality", and quality in life she herself represented. That elusive essence of character that allowed her to see people as they were, and yet to find them good. Faith, hope, charity, these old words rang clear in their meaning for Cid, especially the last one, so often called love. In "A View from the Hill" she talked about all this just as if she sat beside you explaining the deep satisfactions of mature years, joys like friendships, built up and expanded every year. Her chapter ends

"There is a line from the poet Yates that I am always quoting, and which everyone should be able to quote with me: 'and say my glory was I had such friends'."

Today, after the chilling rain on Friday, most of the dark red leaves of the hornbeam tree have fallen off, and its branches outline a stark spider web against the wintry sky. We who were Cid's friends know that the soft green will return in the spring, and that next October we will again know its glory.

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